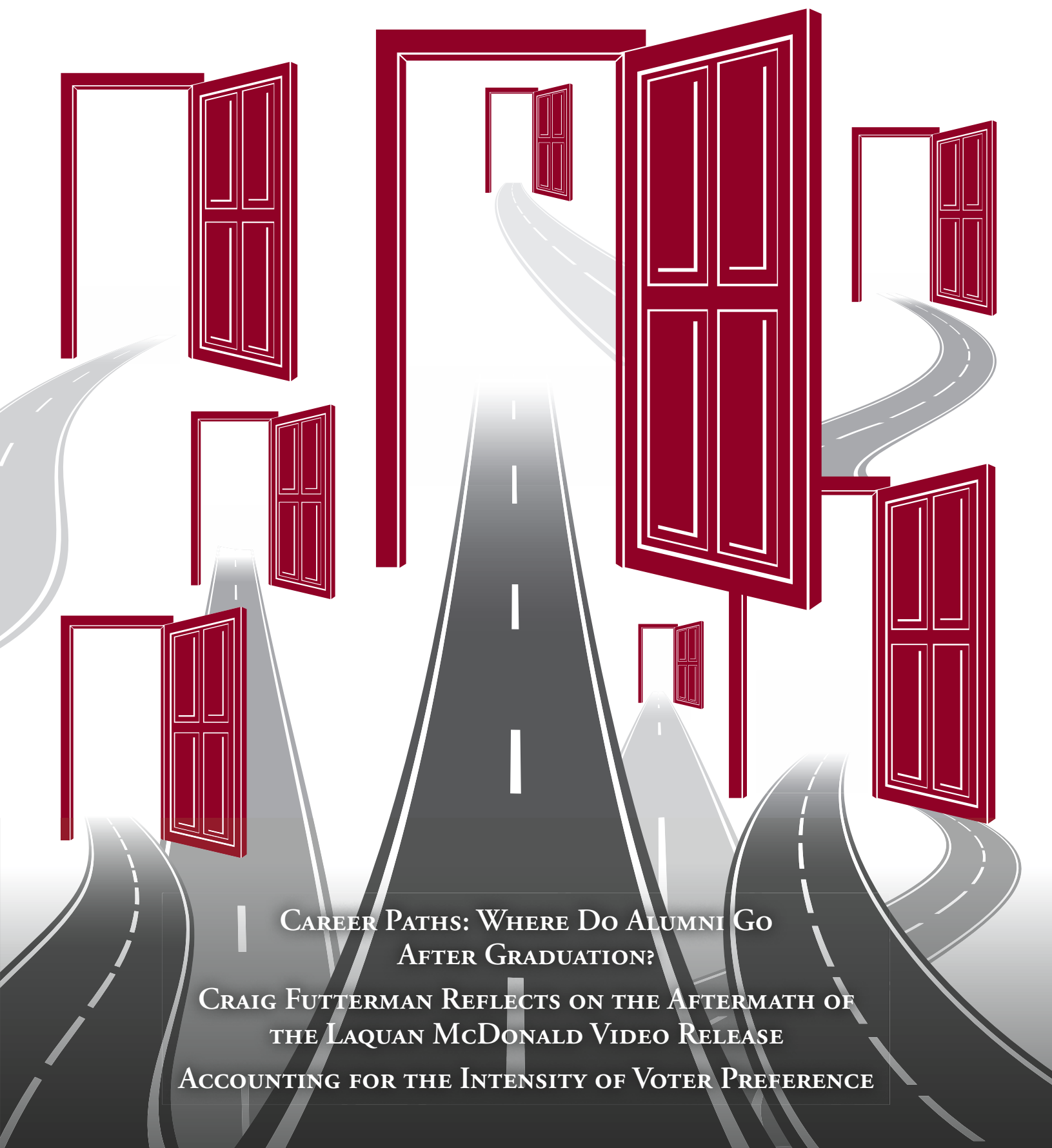


CHICAGO LAW



The University of Chicago Law School Record

Fall 2016



CAREER PATHS: WHERE DO ALUMNI GO
AFTER GRADUATION?

CRAIG FUTTERMAN REFLECTS ON THE AFTERMATH OF
THE LAQUAN McDONALD VIDEO RELEASE

ACCOUNTING FOR THE INTENSITY OF VOTER PREFERENCE

Renaissance Judge Retires from “Legal Heaven” and Returns to Practice

Susan Phillips Read, '72, has been referred to as the “Renaissance Judge” for her broad range of nonjudicial interests as well as for her diverse legal experiences. She sat for more than 12 years on New York’s highest court, the Court of Appeals, stepping down from that bench last year. She is now of counsel in the Albany and New York City offices of



Susan Phillips Read, '72

Greenberg Traurig and a member of the commercial arbitration panel of the American Arbitration Association (AAA). Her earlier career included stints at a federal agency (the Atomic Energy Commission), a state agency (the State University of New York), a private company (General Electric), and a law firm (Bond, Schoeneck & King). She had also been deputy counsel to New York Governor

George Pataki and had served on the state’s Court of Claims.

Read has made her home in upstate New York since she married Howard Read, '69, in 1973. She describes her husband as “a native New Yorker who considered living more than 25 miles from the Saratoga [horse-racing] track a hardship too heavy to bear.” Mr. Read, who now remains of counsel at the law firm that he cofounded in 1983, had gone to Albany shortly after graduation to join New York’s Department of Public Service, which regulates public utilities.

“I was not at all thrilled by the prospect of living and practicing law outside a major metropolitan area,” Read recalls. She was heartened by the advice of her Law School mentor, Phil Kurland: “He told me to buck up—that Albany was, after all, a state capital, so I was bound to find interesting legal work. He was certainly right about that, although neither of us could have possibly imagined the career that took me to the bench of the preeminent common law and commercial court in the United States.”

Kurland was just one of many Law School professors who influenced her. She says, “I think of my time at the Law School as its Golden Age, with Soia Mentschikoff, Harry Kalven, Grant Gilmore, and so many other brilliant minds. I know that everyone who attends the Law School thinks of their time there as its Golden Age—there’s no better indicator than that of what a great school it has been and continues to be—but it’s no wonder that being immersed in that legal hothouse made me fall in love with the law and want to be as good at it as I could be.”

About the Court of Appeals, Read says, “Our Chief Judge was right in calling it ‘lawyer’s heaven.’ My extraordinary colleagues and I heard so many important cases argued by great advocates. I would like my legal epitaph to be something like ‘She advocated her position forcefully, but was always willing to consider compromise to achieve the clarity promoted by unanimity.’”

The nonjudicial activities that earned Read the “Renaissance” label include her energetic service as a director, and now board chair, of the Saratoga Performing Arts Center, which is the summer home of the New York City Ballet, the Philadelphia Orchestra, and the Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center. She is also a trustee of the Historical Society of the New York Courts and the Williamstown Theater Festival. Raised in an arts-loving family, she studied ballet, piano, and voice and had anticipated a career in music until the law captivated her. She has acquired a not-inconsiderable knowledge of horse racing, and as a self-described “sports nut” she has been known to wear a favorite football team’s insignia under her judicial robes.

Busy though she is with her present responsibilities at Greenberg Traurig and the AAA, Read intends to find time for things she wasn’t able to fully attend to before, among them more service to arts organizations, more leisure time and travel with her husband, and more piano playing. “My lovely Yamaha upright just sits in the corner, looking lonely and muttering that it needs to be tuned,” she says. “I hope to change that soon.”